

Adjournment Debate

suggest that the answer to all of the questions put to me by the Hon. Member lie in that example. In this case we need to build in some defences because it may be that a merger may be beneficial to the public at large through lower prices, more choices, and better quality products. That, in essence, is the answer to the Hon. Member's question.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, just as the Member for York East (Mr. Redway) can quote an example of where he thought this was beneficial, we can pick out examples where mergers have been absolutely disastrous for individuals. For example, in the Rosenberg case of the buy-out of the trust companies, the people lost all their savings. Would he not agree that there should be prohibition and the right to appeal in an open court in order to prove that it is in fact beneficial to consumers? Second, why is there no provision for class action suits which, it seems to me, is one of the most effective ways of keeping the corporate sector on its toes?

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member had listened carefully to my remarks and had read carefully the Bill before us, he would have noted that in a merger situation there is a requirement for prenotification to the competition tribunal where there are assets or sales on the part of one company of \$500 million and assets or sales on the part of the company being taken over of only \$35 million.

The Hon. Member has spoken about the Rosenberg situation and other cases of trust companies. If the Hon. Member looks carefully at the assets of those companies, he will find that they were far in excess of the bottom line limit for the requirement of the prenotification notice to the tribunal. Therefore, there is going to be, not only a review, but an opportunity on the appeal for the public hearing to which the Hon. Member has been referring. If he examines this piece of legislation carefully and does not close his mind to it, as he so often does on other matters, I am sure he will be quite happy with it as this is going to be an effective piece of legislation.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 66 deemed to have been moved.

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES—POLICY GOVERNING HOMOSEXUALS AND LESBIANS. (B) GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, on March 4 of this year I directed a question to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Nielsen) concerning the policy of the Canadian Armed Forces with regard to the hiring and retention of homosexuals in the Canadian Armed Forces. At that time I asked that the Minister confirm that these policies, as set out in Canadian Armed Forces administrative order 19-20, be immediately rescinded to ensure full equality for gays and lesbians as recommended unanimously by the parliamentary

committee on equality rights. At that point, the Minister of National Defence replied that the response of the Government was set out on page 25 of the report which had been tabled that day.

• (1800)

He quoted from that report the following extract. "The Government believes that one's sexual orientation is irrelevant to whether one can perform a job or use a service or facility." While the Government, through the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie), on March 4 in its response to the report of the parliamentary committee on equality rights entitled *Toward Equality* did indeed say that it believes that one's sexual orientation is irrelevant to whether one can perform a job or use a service or a facility, it would appear that there is a great distance between those words and reality, and a real change in policy. The policy continues to deny employment to gays and lesbians within the Armed Forces. The requirement that any person who happens to be gay or lesbian be fired from the Armed Forces is still on the books today.

I want to note the arguments that were made by the parliamentary committee on equality rights on this subject. I had the honour of serving as a member of that committee. We travelled from coast to coast and we heard from many individuals and organizations with respect to this very sensitive question. We noted the Armed Forces has a policy of not recruiting homosexuals and of dismissing homosexuals from the Forces once detected. We noted as well that the individual in question was often subjected to interrogation by the special investigation unit of the Canadian Armed Forces. Within the last four years, 37 members were discharged in 1981; 45 in 1982; 44 in 1983, and 38 in 1984, solely on the basis of their sexual orientation.

The committee heard stories of a number of former members of the Canadian Armed Forces who served in the Forces for years without any problem whatsoever but were released for only one reason, their sexual orientation. These members describe the arbitrary, grossly insensitive treatment to which they were subjected as part of the investigation of their personal lives. They were detained in isolated conditions for many hours and subjected to intensive interrogation about their activities and those of others. The committee unanimously recommended—and I emphasize the unanimity of the committee here with five Conservative Members, one Liberal Member, who I see in the House today, the Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone), and myself—that this policy be repealed. We stated that in this day and age there is no place in Canada for such a policy. The arguments put forward by the Canadian Armed Forces do not justify the present policies. We recommended an amendment to the Human Rights Act to prohibit all discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

When the Minister of National Defence appeared before the equality rights committee, he made it very clear that he fundamentally supported and approved of the policies of the